

United States District Court

for the
Southern District of Texas

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

V.

Jonathan Ray BALDERAS

Case Number:

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of **November 18, 2024** in the county of **Webb** in
(Date)

Southern District of Texas, the defendant(s) violated: the

Code Section

Title 8 United States Code, Section
1324

Offense Description

Knowing and in reckless disregard of the fact that an alien had come to, entered, and remained in the United States in violation of law, did unlawfully transport and move, attempt to transport and move, and conspire to transport and move said alien by means of transportation and otherwise within the United States by means of transportation and otherwise in furtherance of such violation of law.

This criminal complaint is based on these
facts:

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

/s/ Rhianon Fletcher
Complainant's Signature

Rhianon Fletcher, Special Agent
Printed Name and Title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence,

Date: **November 21, 2024**

City and State: **Laredo, Texas**

Judge's Signature

Christopher dos Santos, U.S. Magistrate Judge
Printed Name and Title

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[CONT OF BASIS OF COMPLAINT]

1. On November 18, 2024, Border Patrol Agents (BPAs) were working along the Interstate Highway 35 (IH-35) West Access Road. BPAs have observed the I-35 West Access Road being exploited by undocumented noncitizen (UNC) and narcotics smugglers to circumvent the United States Border Patrol Checkpoint located on the 29 Mile Marker of IH-35. From an elevated position on an overpass at approximately 6:30PM, BPAs observed a gray GMC Sierra turning eastbound near Mile Marker 32. The GMC Sierra had a dark material from all the way in the front of the bed across all the way to the tailgate. BPAs began following the GMC Sierra. When BPAs caught up to the vehicle, BPAS noticed the dark material in the bed of the truck appeared to be covering concealed people based on the contours created by the contents underneath.
2. BPAS performed a roving patrol stop to conduct an immigration inspection on the occupants of the GMC Sierra. BPAs activated emergency equipment signaling to the GMC Sierra to come to a stop. The vehicle, at this point, pulled over.
3. BPAs approached the driver side of the vehicle. Texas Department of Public Safety Troopers and Game Wardens were asked to assist to help watch the passenger side of the vehicle. As BPAs approached the driver side, it was seen what appeared to be contours of the bottom parts of shoes along the edge of the tarp. BPAs began interviewing the driver later identified as Jonathan Ray BALDERAS. BALDERAS stated he was traveling to San Antonio where he (BALDERAS) lived. BPAS asked if any other occupants were accompanying him. BALDERAS stated he was alone. BPAS at this point had already determined there were occupants in the back seat right behind BALDERAS.
4. BPAS asked BALDERAS to exit the vehicle. BALDERAS was asked if he knew what there was in the bed of the vehicle. BALDERAS said no indicating he did not know. BPAs gained BALDERAS' consent to look under the tarp. When asked whether he (BALDERAS) thought there would be anything he should not have, BALDERAS advised, "not that I know of." Upon lifting the corner of the tarp, BPAs discovered people concealed under it. BALDERAS was placed in handcuffs. During a patdown search of BALDERAS, a firearm was discovered on the back part of his (BALDERAS) waistband.
5. A total of ten occupants were found in the GMC Sierra. Two were found in the backseat, all others were in the bed of the GMC Sierra under the tarp. Immigration checks on the ten subjects revealed they were illegally present and did not have documents to be or remain in the United States.
6. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Special Agents responded for investigative assistance. During a post-Miranda interview, BALDERAS explained to agents he was given instructions to arrive at a location in Laredo, Texas. After the UNCs were loaded in the vehicle, BALDERAS was to transport them to a location north of the checkpoint. During a consensual search of his cellphone, it was revealed BALDERAS had participated in human smuggling several times in the past. BALDERAS stated he was going to receive monetary compensation for the smuggling attempt occurring that day (November 18, 2024). When asked if he was aware the individuals in the truck were undocumented, BALDERAS stated he knew the individuals were illegal. When asked if he knew it was illegal to transport the UNCs, BALDERAS stated he knew.

7. HSI Special Agents identified Uveimar Bernabe Vasquez Vasquez as a material witness. Vasquez Vasquez is a native citizen of Guatemala. Vasquez Vasquez was illegally present in the United States. Vasquez Vasquez stated arrangements were made and/or fees were paid to be transported into the interior of the United States.

[END]